CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY

Council of the Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science

Minutes of Meeting 01-01

held

Friday, February 16, 2001 at 2:00 p.m. in H 769

Present:
N. Esmail (Chair)
M.O. Ahmad
A.K. Athienitis
J.W. Atwood
R. Bhat
J. D'Silva
T. Fancott
A. Fargnoli
R. Ganesan
W. Ghaly
J.C. Giguère
G.J. Gouw
F. Haghighat
L. Harris
J. Jans
K. Khorasani
C. Lam
L. Landsberger
G. Martin
O. Moselhi
C. Paradisis
A. Ramamurthy
C.W. Trueman
R. Zmeureanu
S. de Souza (Recording Secretary)

Observers:
M. Silas
E. Xenos

Regrets:
T.D. Bui
R. Jayakumar
L. Quesnel
P. Regimbald
J. Svoboda
S. Tahar

1. Adoption of the Agenda

Motion 01-01-01

That the agenda be adopted (C. Lam, A. Ramamurthy)

Vote: Carried unanimously

2. Adoption of Minutes

Motion 01-01-02

That the Minutes of Meeting 00-07 (December 1, 2000) be adopted (F. Haghighat, A. Ramamurthy)

Vote: Carried unanimously

3. Chair's Remarks

New Engineering Building
The Chair announced that the new building design has been posted on the web. The same can be accessed either through Concordia or the Faculty site. The architect has been hired. The final design details have yet to be completed. No fixed date for the start of construction is available.

The construction cost is estimated at $70 million. While the Faculty already has $44 million ($10 million from CFI, $14 million from rentals, $20 million from the Provincial Government), the balance can be obtained as a mortgage.

Concordia Building Campaign
The Faculty's participation in the Building Campaign, namely 63%, has been the highest not just in Concordia but also in the history of universities across Quebec.

Performance Contract
The members were informed that due to the Premier's intervention in the performance contract issue, the Faculty can now go ahead with its plans that were based on a 3-year government funding. The Faculty plans to hire an additional 40-50 professors and 30-40 support staff to meet the increased enrollment needs.

Enrollment
Enrollment in IT programs has doubled to about 1600 FTEs. Overall, the Faculty has increased its enrollment by 64%, which is an essential element for the new building.

Graduate Curriculum Changes
These have been approved in principle by Senate. The final details have to be worked out. However, Senate has given its approval to implement the changes in the academic year 2001-2002.

Appraisals and Accreditation
The Chair remarked that the University mechanism of program appraisal has started to churn. This is both a threat to and an opportunity for the Faculty: a threat because of the large involvement of faculty members and departments in the appraisal process, and an opportunity because in the fall of 2002 all Engineering programs will have to undergo accreditation. The appraisals will be conducted in 2001-2002 followed by Accreditation in fall 2002.

The Executive Committee has recommended that documentation be prepared for the Accreditation process and that the same information be used in the appraisal of programs. These activities may be considered as a dry run for fall 2002 Accreditation.

The Chair cautioned the members that this is a comprehensive process and no corner of the Faculty will be untouched.

Software Engineering Program
This program is undergoing accreditation, according to the old rules. The Software Engineering Curriculum Committee in the Department of Computer Science has started its work and will be visited by the Canadian Engineering Accreditation Board.

The floor was open to questions.

A member asked if information on the retention rate was available. The Chair responded that the University regards retention as the number of entry-level registrations against the number of graduates. Conditions are attached to the money provided by the government to improve the retention rate. Currently our retention rate is 60%-65%. But the government has established a retention rate of 80% as a requirement.

As this is a university-wide problem, factors that bring down the retention rate are being studied. While we have no control over the social factors such as migration to other cities, academic factors can be determined. A specialist has been hired for six months to work with Student Affairs to study the cohort of students over seven years. There are indications that the Faculty's policy on failed standing may be one of the problems as this does not improve the student's performance. The study, expected to be completed in June, may shed some light.

Conducting a survey among students in failed standing might be another means to determine the retention rate.

It was remarked that a study is being carried out on actual CRC (Code de Rendement au Collégial) scores as opposed to the success rate in the university itself. The only important inference is the correlation that students with CRC scores of 30 or above are usually classified as excellent students. The 20-30 score group shows no correlation at all. Findings indicate that when we aim at admitting excellent students, our aim is random at this point and needs consideration. There is a lack of correlation between CRC scores and students' subsequent success. Statistics also point out that there is no difference in the success rate between students who have had to wait for one year due to failed standing and those admitted directly. Our practices need to be reexamined. We must find new and imaginative ways to determine if the student is suited for the Engineering program.

In the first year, a lot of sorting out is done. The social adjustment of first-year students is another factor in the retention rate. Other suggestions to improve the retention rate involved not including independent students in the FTE count.

Members were reminded that retention is primarily an undergraduate phenomenon.

4. **Fast-Track Provisional Approval Process for Short Graduate Certificates - Criteria (ECFC Doc. 20001-01-01)**

The Chair informed the members that the Provost wanted feedback on the issue.

It was pointed out that with respect to Criterion # 5 of the circulated document, the fast-track approach cannot be used to introduce new programs. However, this approach is beneficial to the Faculty in creating new courses and short programs to meet the needs of industry.

5. **Approval of Composition of Student Request Committee**

A request was made to approve the following composition of the Student Request Committee, in accordance with Section 16.1.8 in the Undergraduate Calendar 2000-2001.

Dr. R. Zmeureanu, Department of Building, Civil and Environmental Engineering
Dr. R. Ganesan, Department of Mechanical Engineering
Dr. C. Wang, Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering
Dr. T. Fancott, Associate Dean and Chair of the Committee
Sushi Grewal, Vice-President Academic (student rep)
Joycelyn Weatherspoon-Jones (representative appointed by the Registrar)

The purpose of the Student Request Committee was explained.

Motion 01-01-03 **That the Student Request Committee be established with the composition listed on page 3** (G. Gouw, T. Fancott)

Vote: Carried unanimously

6. Faculty Personnel and Tenure Committee (FPTC)

It was explained that since the FPTC has a busy schedule during the coming months, it was essential to fill the void created due to the retirement of Dr. J.F. Hayes.

Motion 01-01-04 **That Dr. A.K. Elhakeem replace Dr. Hayes as a member of the FPTC until May 31, 2001** (J.W. Atwood, M.O. Ahmad)

Vote: Carried unanimously

7. Other Business

Dr. Jans announced that graduate students should be encouraged to nominate their mentors for the Graduate Student Mentoring Award, this being the first year.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:55 p.m.